

Ex-CIA head said Castro was no communist

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WASHINGTON - A few weeks after Fidel Castro's rise to power in 1959, CIA chief Allen Dulles told the Senate in a secret briefing the Cuban leader did not have "any communist leanings," according to a report released yesterday.

"He has certainly shown great courage," Dulles said of Castro before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Jan. 26, 1959. The committee yesterday released a 900-page declassified report on hearings held in 1959.

"We do not think that Castro himself has any communist leanings," Dulles told the panel 25 days after Castro overthrew dictator Fulgencio Batista. "We do not believe Castro is in the pay of or working for the communists."

"We believe, however, that this is a situation on which the communists could capitalize if there is not a move to get control of the situation more fully than Castro has control of it now."

"American intervention there at this time, or even before, would

have had a disastrous effect throughout the whole hemisphere and I see no alternative - that is a matter of policy," he told the committee.

Dulles was less generous about Castro's brother, Raul, now Cuba's defense minister, and about Argentina-born revolutionary Ernesto (Che) Guevara, the head of Castro's agrarian reform program who was killed in Bolivia in 1967.

"His brother is more irresponsible," Dulles said. "This fellow 'Che' Guevara, the Argentinian who has been fighting with him, we are rather suspicious about him." Dulles also was less than complimentary about Batista, who fled Havana for Miami on Jan. 1, 1959. "We felt that Batista was on the losing end of the stick weeks before it came to an end," Dulles said.

"In fact, an effort was made through extradiplomatic means, quietly, to see whether he would not depart, and an effort was made to see if one could put in an interim government that would at least permit negotiations with Castro."

"He stayed on too long, so that was impossible and Castro came in," Dulles said, in talking of a development replayed 20 years later when Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza Debayle did not leave Managua until it was too late.

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Guatemala as Cold War I

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With the increasing accumulation of interpretive scholarship on international relations following World War II, most episodes in the cold war have been written and rewritten, evaluated and reevaluated. One striking exception, however, is the 1954 American intervention in Guatemala, which led to the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman's constitutionally elected government. This article studies the antecedents, events, and consequences of that coup.

Analyses of hitherto unavailable archival data and of interviews with American participants in the coup who were privy to the covert aspects of the operation suggest that this event was a significant link in the unfolding chain of cold war history. Writings to date on the overthrow of Arbenz tend to be short on detailed documentation and analysis and to treat the coup illustratively. These accounts depict the United States intervention in Guatemala either as a background incident in the escalating cold war, as an example of the inordinate influence of economic interests (in this case the United Fruit Company [UFCO]) on American foreign policy, or as a way station in the evolution of the Central Intelligence Agency. These treatments fail to emphasize sufficiently that the coup typified the foundations of cold war diplomacy, providing a model to be emulated, and resisted, in subsequent years.¹

¹ The most widely cited source remains Ronald Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala, 1944-1954* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1958), although more recent studies such as Cole Blasier, *The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), pp. 151-77; Max Gordon, "A Case History of U.S. Subversion: Guatemala, 1954," *Science and Society* 35 (Summer 1971): 129-55; and Stephen Schlesinger, "How

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